(b) if so, the details thereof since June to October, 2009;

(c) whether officials of Directorate of Commercial are involved in selling of VIP quota to touts;

(d) if so, the action she would take against guilty officials and touts;

(e) whether a Parliamentary Committee would be constituted to enquire into the matter; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE): (a) to (d) One print media has reported that touts pay money in Rail Bhawan to get VIP quota released. No specific information has been quoted.

(e) and (f) Efforts are made to bridge the gap between demand and supply of reserved accommodation by planning holiday special trains during the peak rush periods, putting on extra coaches to meet the day-to-day requirements and increasing the number of coaches on permanent basis in those trains which have high demand and patronage. Moreover, random checks are conducted in association with Vigilance Organisation. If any Railway official is found involved in any irregularity, the official is taken up severely. The process of checks and tightening of procedures is a continuous activity and is closely monitored.

Bhargava Committee on IIMs

*233. SHRI MANOHAR JOSHI: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has rejected Bhargava Committee's Pan-IIM Board recommendations;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action Government proposes to take in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) to (c) The Government has consulted the Board of Governors of individual IIMs on the recommendation of the R.C. Bhargava Committee on the creation of a Pan-IIM Board. Since none of the IIMs were agreeable to the concept, the Ministry in consultation with IIMs has proposed that an informal body comprising Directors of IIM headed by the NRM will meet every six months, to deal with issues common to all IIMs.

Decrease in cultivable land due to conversion for other purposes

*234. SHRI N. BALAGANGA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the fact that the extent of cultivable land is decreasing every year due to its conversion for other purposes affecting thereby production of foodgrains;

(b) if so, the action on part of Government to look into the grave concern endangering the food security of the country; and

(c) whether Central Government advises States to protect the cultivable land which are being utilized for other than agricultural purposes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) Yes, Sir. The cultivable land has marginally decreased from 182.88 million ha. of 2004-05 to 182.71 million ha. in 2006-07 leading to average annual decrease in cultivable land by 0.057 million ha. The Net Sown Area has also marginally decreased from 141.07 million ha. of 2004-05 to 140.30 million ha. in 2006-07. During the same period, land under non-agricultural purposes has increased from 24.93 million ha. to 25.19 million ha. Despite the decrease in the extent of cultivable land foodgrain production has increased from 198.36 million Tonnes in 2004-05 to 230.78 Million Tonnes in 2007-08.

(b) and (c) As per the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India, Land falls under the purview of the State Governments and, therefore, it is for the State Governments to bring suitable Act/Legislation to protect use of agricultural land for non agricultural purposes. With a view to prevent the use of agriculture land for non-agricultural purposes and sustaining food security of the country, the National Policy for Farmers 2007 has recommended that prime farmland must be conserved for agriculture except under exceptional circumstances, provided that the agencies that are provided with agricultural land for non-agricultural projects should compensate for treatment and full development of equivalent degraded/wastelands elsewhere. Further, the commitment under the existing re-settlement policy of the Central/State Governments would be fulfilled in letter and spirit. For non-agricultural purposes, as far as possible, land with low biological potential for farming would be earmarked and allocated. State Governments have been advised to earmark lands with low biological potential such as uncultivable land, land affected by salinity, acidity, etc., for non-agricultural development activities, including industrial and construction activities.

In addition, the National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy, 2007 formulated by Ministry of Rural Development, Department of Land Resources came into effect on 31.10.2007. The policy provides that only the minimum area of land commensurate with the purpose of a project may be acquired. Also, as far as possible, projects may be set up on wasteland, degraded land or un-irrigated land. Acquisition of agricultural land for non-agricultural use in the projects may be kept to the minimum; multi-cropped land may be avoided to the extent possible for such purposes and acquisition of irrigated land, if unavoidable, may be kept to the minimum. The policy has been sent to the States/UTs for implementation.

Government of India is conscious of the need for taking measures to ensure food security of our country. With a view to prevent land degradation and to bring additional land under

cultivation as well as increasing the productivity of the existing land under agriculture, Government of India is implementing various schemes/programmes namely, National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPRA), Soil Conservation for Enhancing the Productivity of Degraded Lands in the Catchments of River Valley Project and Flood Prone River (RVP and FPR), Reclamation and Development of Alkali and Acid Soils (RADAS), Watershed Development Project in Shifting Cultivation Areas (WDPSCA), Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) etc. in the country. Three major initiatives namely, National Food Security Mission (NFSM), National Horticulture Mission (NHM) and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) have been launched to enhance productivity of agricultural land and sustaining food security across the country.

Panel for revamping school education

*235. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has set up a panel for revamping school education in the country;

(b) if so, whether the standard of school education throughout the country is not up to the mark;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) to what extent the panel set up by Government for revamping school education throughout the country is going to improve the standards?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) to (d) A Round Table comprising educationists, academicians and representatives of civil society has been constituted on 23.9.2009 to advise the Department of School Education and Literacy on macro and micro issues pertaining to school education. The Round Table is one of the several forums in the Department for consultation and interaction on the various aspects of school education. Discussions in the Round Table are an ongoing process, and todate three meetings have been held, covering *inter alia* issues relating to universalisation of elementary education, teacher education, and public-private partnership in education. School education is largely in the domain of the State Governments, and standards across the country are uneven. Improving quality, content and process to reinforce the national and integrative character of education is a continuing endeavour of the Department of School Education and Literacy.

Abolition of insurance amount given to victims of train accidents

†*236. SHRI PRABHAT JHA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.